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## *Soviets Criticized On Aid to Cuba*

The White House yesterday sharply criticized Soviet military shipments to Cuba and indicated that President Reagan will soon speak out on the subject.

Deputy press secretary Larry Speakes was asked about a report, first published Jan. 13 in The Washington Post, that crates of new Soviet aircraft have been detected at an airfield outside Havana. He declined to comment on the specific intelligence report, but said:

"We do note that the Soviets have expanded the military modernization of Cuba through the years." He said the Soviet Union sent three times more military equipment to Cuba in 1981 than in any year since 1962.

"We believe that Soviet deliveries to Cuba facilitate trans-shipments to such countries as Nicaragua," Speakes said. "These arms are ultimately used against El Salvador."

Reagan has before him a wide range of options for responses to the Soviet shipments, Speakes said, and "it might well be that the president will elect to implement one of them." Speakes added, however, that he did not mean to give the impression that Reagan is about to take action against the Soviets or Cuba.

The crates could contain Mig 23 fighters, which Moscow insists are defensive weapons and therefore do not violate the 1962 understanding under which the Soviets promised not to send offensive weapons to Cuba. They also could contain a bomber version of the Mig 23, which could represent a violation of the understanding.